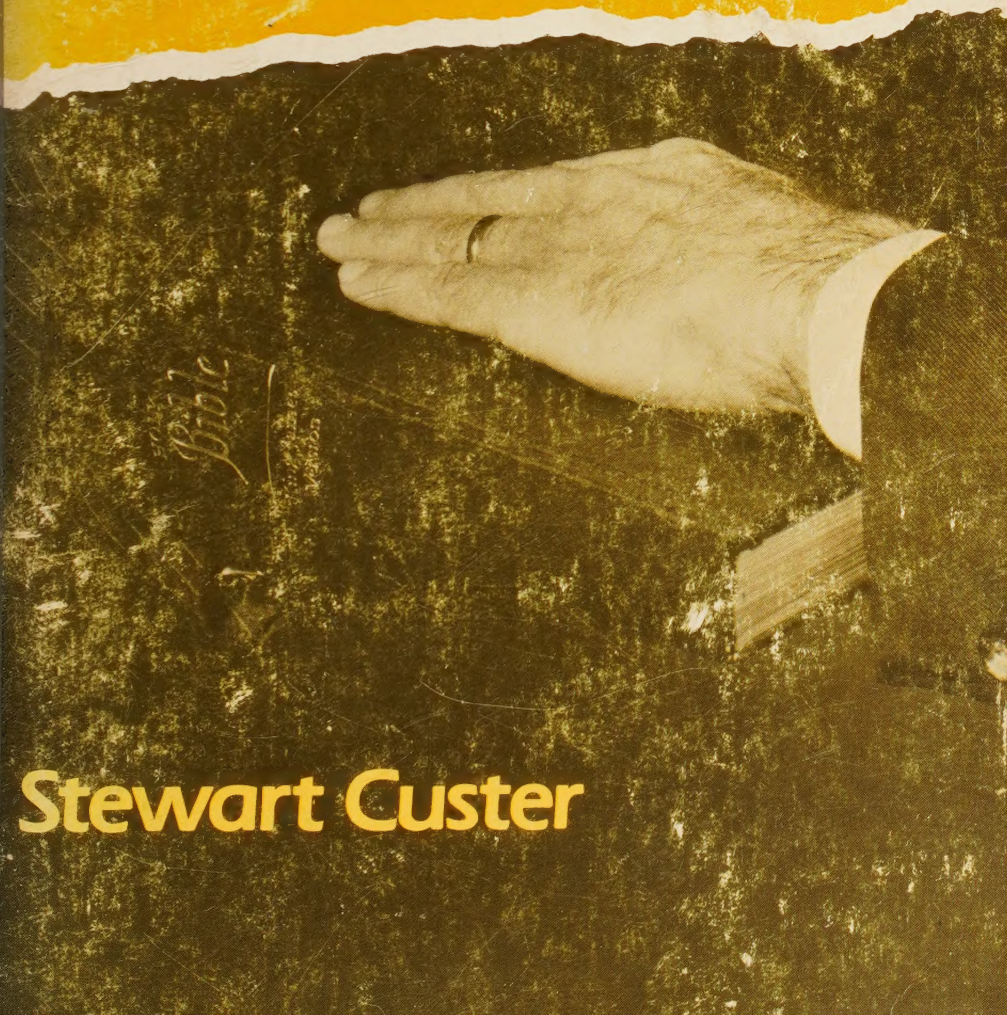
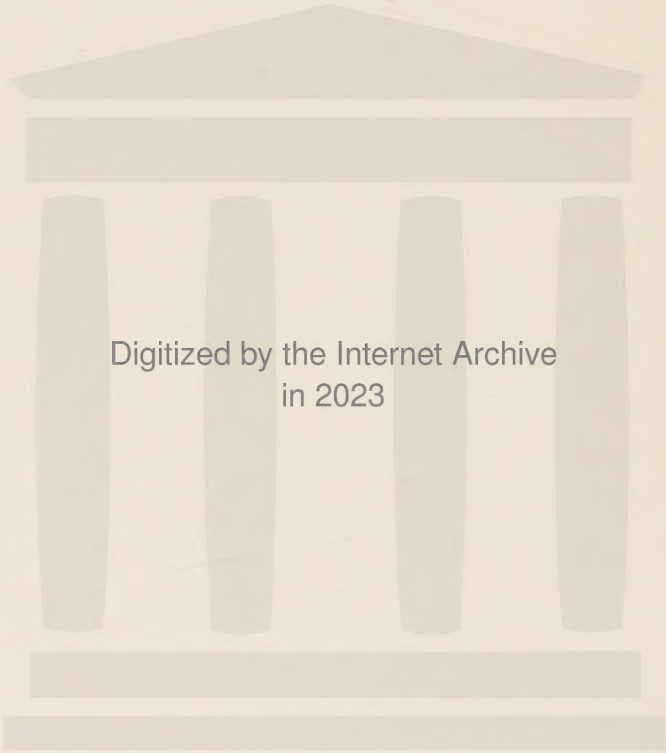
THE TRUTH ABOUT THE KING JAMES VERSION CONTROVERSY



Stewart Custer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Stewart Custer

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by Stewart Custer
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INTRODUCTION

For years Mr. Peter S. Ruckman has claimed to know more than fundamental Bible scholars "on any campus" and has claimed to have absolute authority to teach and preach (*The Christian's Handbook of Manuscript Evidence*, p. 6). His claimed life work is to demonstrate that "the A.V. 1611" is "the Word of God" (*Handbook of Manuscript Evidence*, p. II). As much as Fundamentalists have loved and defended a great translation like the King James Version, they must remember that the court of last resort in doctrinal matters is not any translation, but the wording of the original Greek and Hebrew texts. Mr. Ruckman has asked, "Has anyone noticed that Aleph, B, A, and C *are 90% the text of the A.V. 1611?*" (*Handbook*, p. 89). This is a candid admission that 90% of the King James Bible is an accurate translation of the oldest manuscripts that we possess—manuscripts on which Mr. Ruckman pours such contempt and vilification. In fact, Mr. Ruckman goes on to say that he has doctrinal problems with only "152 out of 8000 verses" in the Bible (*Handbook*, p. 89). That means that Mr. Ruckman is basing his fight on 1.9% of the verses in the Bible. The believer can read the other 7848 verses in either the "A.V. 1611" or the New American Standard Bible; there is no doctrinal difference between them. What Mr. Ruckman does not make clear is that there is not a single doctrine found in the King James Version that is not also found in the New

American Standard Bible. There may be differences in the wording of some verses, but there is not a single doctrine that is missing. There is not a single title which is applied to the Lord Jesus Christ by the King James Version which is not also applied to Him by the New American Standard Bible. There may be verses in which a given title is omitted by the earliest manuscripts, but there are hundreds more verses that do apply the title to Him. Thus God, in His marvelous providence, has seen to it that both the Textus Receptus and the Alexandrian family of manuscripts set forth every doctrine that He inspired, and that both give to the Lord Jesus Christ the honor that is due His Name. There is no fundamental doctrine that is at stake between these two families of manuscripts. Fundamental scholars simply want to know which one goes back the closest to the original manuscripts, and therefore which is the most accurate. Mr. Ruckman does admit that all the early manuscripts belong to the Alexandrian family, "leaving the Syrian text standing like a cold cat in the snow, with nothing but *late manuscripts to support it*" (sic, *Handbook of Manuscript Evidence*, p. 89).

In the following pages we will discuss the manuscript evidence as well as a number of things that have disturbed sincere believers. We will also discuss a number of things that Mr. Ruckman has taught to defend his interpretation of the evidence. The evidence demonstrates that Mr. Ruckman is not a reliable interpreter.

PART I.
The Greek Manuscripts

We must begin with a brief listing of some of the Greek manuscripts so that the reader will be able to follow the references to technical ideas concerning manuscripts, manuscript families, dating of manuscripts, and other important arguments. The oldest manuscripts that have been found are the papyrus manuscripts (numbered from P1 to P88). They have been discovered recently and were entirely unknown to Erasmus and other early scholars who tried to draw up a Greek testament. The next most important group of manuscripts are numbered with capital letters. The remainder are simply numbered. When Erasmus drew up his edition of the Greek New Testament (now called the Textus Receptus), he had at his disposal E, F, G, and H, which date from the eighth and ninth centuries. (See the following table of manuscripts, pages 2-4). He knew almost nothing at all about the other manuscripts which often are dated many centuries before the ones he used. The King James Bible follows the readings of the Textus Receptus. The Alexandrian family of manuscripts includes the 88 papyrus manuscripts found in Egypt and all the other manuscripts which were unknown to Erasmus. Modern translations such as the New American Standard Bible try to follow a text which takes all the manuscripts into consideration.

TABLE OF GREEK MANUSCRIPTS[1]

Symbol	Century	City	Contents
P1	III	Philadelphia	Portions of Matthew
P2	VI	Florence	Portions of John
P3	VI,VII	Vienna	Portions of Luke
P4	III	Paris	Portions of Luke
P5	III	London	Portions of Luke
P6	IV	Strasbourg	Portions of John
P7	IV-VI(?)	Kiev	Portions of Luke
P8	IV	Berlin	Portions of Acts
P9	III	Cambridge, Mass.	Portions of I John
P10	IV	Cambridge, Mass.	Portions of Romans
P11	VII	Leningrad	Portions of I Corinthians
P12	III	New York	Portions of Hebrews
P13	III/IV	London and Florence	Portions of Hebrews
P14	V	Sinai	Portions of I Corinthians
P15	III	Cairo	Portions of I Corinthians
P16	III/IV	Cairo	Portions of Philippians
P17	IV	Cambridge	Portions of Hebrews
P18	III/IV	London	Portions of Revelation
P19	IV/V	Oxford	Portions of Matthew
P20	III	Princeton	Portions of James
P21	IV/V	Allentown, Pa.	Portions of Matthew
P22	III	Glasgow	Portions of John
P23	III	Urbana, Ill.	Portions of James
P24	IV	Newton Center, Mass.	Portions of Revelation
P25	IV	Berlin	Portions of Matthew
P26	ca. 600	Dallas	Portions of Romans
P27	III	Cambridge	Portions of Romans
P28	III	Berkeley	Portions of John
P29	III	Oxford	Portions of Acts
P30	III	Ghent	Portions of I and II Thess.
P31	VII	Manchester	Portions of Romans
P32	ca. 200	Manchester	Portions of Titus
P33	VI	Vienna	Portions of Acts
P34	VII	Vienna	Portions of I and II Cor.
P35	IV(?)	Florence	Portions of Matthew
P36	VI	Florence	Portions of John
P37	III/IV	Ann Arbor, Mich.	Portions of Matthew
P38	ca. 300	Ann Arbor, Mich.	Portions of Acts
P39	III	Chester, Pa.	Portions of John
P40	III	Heidelberg	Portions of Romans
P41	VIII	Vienna	Portions of Acts
P42	VII/VIII	Vienna	Portions of Luke

P43	VI/VII	London	Portions of Revelation
P44	VI/VII	New York	Portions of Matthew and John
P45	III	Dublin	Portions of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Acts
P46	ca. 200	Dublin	Portions of Romans, I and II Cor., Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, I Thess., and Hebrews
P47	III	Dublin	Portions of Revelation
P48	III	Florence	Portions of Acts
P49	III	New Haven, Conn.	Portions of Ephesians
P50	IV/V	New Haven, Conn.	Portions of Acts
P51	ca. 400	Oxford	Portions of Galatians
P52	II	Manchester	Portions of John
P53	III	Ann Arbor	Portions of Matthew and Acts
P54	V/VI	Princeton	Portions of James
P55	VI/VII	Vienna	Portions of John
P56	V/VI	Vienna	Portions of Acts
P57	IV/V	Vienna	Portions of Acts
P59	VI	New York	Portions of John
P60	VII	New York	Portions of John
P61	ca. 700	New York	Portions of Romans, I Cor., Philippians, Colossians, I Thess., Titus, and Philemon
P62	IV	Oslo	Portions of Matthew
P63	ca. 500	Berlin	Portions of John
P64	ca. 200	Oxford and Barcelona	Portions of Matthew
P65	III	Florence	Portions of I Thessalonians
P66	ca. 200	Cologne	Portions of John
P68	VII(?)	Leningrad	Portions of I Corinthians
P69	III	Oxford	Portions of Luke
P70	III	Oxford	Portions of Matthew
P71	IV	Oxford	Portions of Matthew
P72	III/IV	Cologne	Portions of I and II Peter, and Jude
P73	?	Cologne	Portions of Matthew
P74	VII	Cologne	Portions of Acts, I and II Peter, James, I, II, & III John, and Jude
P75	III	Geneva	Portions of Luke
P76	VI	Vienna	Portions of John
P77	II/III	Oxford	Portions of Matthew
P78	III/IV	Oxford	Portions of Jude
P79	VII	Berlin	Portions of Hebrews
P80	III	Barcelona	Portions of John
P81	IV	Barcelona	Portions of I Peter
P82	IV/V	Strasbourg	Portions of Luke

P83	VI	Louvain	Portions of Matthew
P84	VI	Louvain	Portions of Mark and John
P85	IV/V	Strasbourg	Portions of Revelation
P86	IV	Cologne	Portions of Matthew
P87	III	Cologne	Portions of Philemon
P88	IV	Milan	Portions of Mark
Aleph Sinaiticus	IV	London	Gospels, Acts, Epistles, Revelation
A Alexandrinus	V	London	Gospels, Acts, Epistles, Revelation (minus portions of Matthew, John, II Corinthians)
B Vaticanus	IV	Rome	Gospels, Acts, Epistles (minus portions of I Timothy—Philemon, Hebrews)
C Ephraemi Rescriptus	V	Paris	Portions of all the books of the New Testament
D Bezae Cantabrigiensis	V	Cambridge	Portions of the Gospels, Acts, James and Jude
D* Claromontanus	VI	Paris	Portions of Pauline Epistles
E	VII	Basel	Gospels
E* Laudianus	VI	Oxford	Acts, James, I & II Peter, I, II, & III John, Jude
F	IX	Utrecht	The Gospels
F*	IX	Cambridge	Pauline Epistles
G	IX	London and Cambridge	Acts, James, I & II Peter, I, II, & III John, Jude
G* Boernerianus	IX	Dresden	Portions of the Pauline Epistles
H	IX	Hamburg and Cambridge	The Gospels
H*	VI	Athos and elsewhere	Portions of the Pauline Epistles

1. Drawn from Nestle-Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*. 26th Ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1979.

Although this is a very brief list of the 88 papyri and a few of the oldest uncial manuscripts, it does give the Christian some sense of the overwhelming evidence God has preserved for us concerning His infallible Word. There is no literary work in the ancient world that has even a tenth of this evidence for it. Some of Plato's dialogues are preserved for us by only one manuscript. God has providentially preserved for us His Word in such an abundance of manuscripts that we have great assurance as to the wording of His revelation for our salvation.

PART II.
The Conservative Position

The Original Greek Text

Our knowledge of the original Greek texts that Matthew, Paul, and the other New Testament writers wrote comes from about 5000 Greek manuscripts that have been discovered. No two of these manuscripts are exactly alike. They are all copies of copies. They are all hand written; hence there are differences in word order, sentence structure, etc., between them all. Textual scholars have compared all these manuscripts together in order to draw up the modern printed Greek New Testaments. In about 90% of the manuscripts' readings all the manuscripts are agreed. This is unquestionably the wording of the original text. In the other cases scholars are not as certain of the wording and will usually give footnotes to show the alternative readings. In most of these instances there is no doubt which of the readings is the best. There are very few passages in which any real question remains about the wording of the original texts. Westcott and Hort maintained that out of the 500 pages of the Greek New Testament there was only about half a page about which any question remained as to the wording of the original.

This comparison of manuscripts led to the discovery of four different types of texts. All the manuscripts fall into four different patterns of readings. One of these text types is the

Caesarean. It has been clearly identified only in the Gospel of Mark. The other three are found throughout the New Testament. The two earliest are the Alexandrian and Western texts. They are both found in the second and third centuries of the Christian era. The Byzantine text originated in the middle of the fourth century.

The important thing to note is that *each of these four types of texts is theologically conservative.* Each one sets forth an accurate gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, His deity, the personality and deity of the Holy Spirit, the blood atonement, justification by faith, and the other major doctrines of the faith. Not one of these texts can be called heretical or apostate as Mr. Ruckman alleges. For example, the deity of Christ is close to the heart of every born-again believer. In the Alexandrian text Jesus Christ is called "Lord" some 749 times. The deity of Christ is taught as well in 161 verses in the Gospels and Acts; in the Thessalonian and Corinthian epistles it is taught in 57 more verses; in Romans and Galatians it is taught in 40 more verses. The deity of Christ is not found in just a few proof texts; it is woven into the very structure of the New Testament. It does not matter at all which of these types of texts you examine—all of them set forth the deity of Christ hundreds and hundreds of times. Every one of the major doctrines of the faith is found in each kind of text. There is no attempt to twist or to disparage any of the great doctrines of the faith.

Someone will say, "Does not the Alexandrian text omit the title 'Lord' in some passages?" It is not that the Alexandrian text is deliberately omitting the title. Rather, the manuscripts from which the Alexandrian text was copied did not have it in them. That still does not alter a single doctrine. Suppose that the Alexandrian text does not have the title "Lord" in some 20 verses in which the Byzantine text does have it. There are still 749 times in which the Alexandrian text does apply the title "Lord" to Christ. The doctrine is there; there is no attempt to "play down" the doctrine. Most of the differences in modern Bibles are differences in translation rather than differences in text. Most of the modern translations are poor, not because they use a different text, but because they are doctrinally prejudiced and will not allow the text to say what it says.

In the chart on page 7, the reader can see at a glance

that both the King James Version (which follows the Byzantine text) and the New American Standard Version (which follows the Alexandrian text) call Jesus Christ *God* again and again. The Jehovah's Witnesses' Bible, the *New World Translation*, refuses to apply the title *God* to Christ in any of the passages. It is not that it is following a different text; it is simply refusing to let the text say what it says. This is indeed doctrinal bias and justifies calling the *New World Translation* a heretical book. In one of the verses (Titus 2:13) the King James rendering sounds as though two persons of the Trinity are mentioned. This is not because of doctrinal bias, but because the translators in 1611 did not know that the Greek grammatical construction applied both titles to the Lord Jesus. The translators of the New American Standard, with better knowledge of the grammatical construction, correctly call Christ "our great God and Savior." Only in one of these verses is there an actual difference in the text. In John 1:18 the Alexandrian text calls Christ *God*, but the Byzantine text calls Him *Son*. It is not doctrinal bias which is involved, but simply the fact that one text has one word and the other has the other word. There is no attempt to obscure either the doctrine of His deity or His sonship at all.

King James Version	**New American Standard**	**New World Translation (Jehovah's Witnesses)**
John 1:1 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*	*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*	*In [the] beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god.*
John 1:18 *No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*	*No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.*	*No man has seen God at any time; the only-begotten god who is in the bosom position with the Father is the one that has explained him.*

King James Version	New American Standard	New World Translation (Jehovah's Witnesses)
Acts 20:28 *Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*	*Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.*	*Pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the holy spirit has appointed you overseers, to shepherd the congregation of God, which he purchased with the blood of his own [Son].*
Romans 9:5 *Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.*	*Whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.*	*To whom the forefathers belong and from whom Christ [sprang] according to the flesh: God, who is over all, [be] blessed forever. Amen.*
Titus 2:13 *Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;*	*Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our God and Savior, Christ Jesus;*	*While we wait for the happy hope and glorious manifestation of the great God and of our Savior Christ Jesus,*
Hebrews 1:8 *But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.*	*But of the Son He says, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever, And the righteous scepter is the scepter of His kingdom.*	*But with reference to the Son: "God is your throne forever, and [the] scepter of your kingdom is the scepter of uprightness."*

The real question which must be settled is which type of text most closely reflects the wording of the original. Good men may disagree on this question without automatically becoming

heretics or apostates. Before one can make up his mind on this question, there are certain facts that must be candidly faced.

The Alexandrian text is older and better attested than the others. Some of the early manuscripts that manifest the Alexandrian text include: P20 (III century, James), P23 (IV century, James), P45 (III century, Acts), P46 (III century, Paul), P47 (III century, Revelation), P50 (IV century, Acts), P52 (II century, John), P66 (II century, John), P75 (II-III century, Luke, John), as well as the great codexes: Aleph (IV century), B (IV century), and A (V century, Acts—Revelation). This is overwhelming evidence that the Alexandrian text was widely attested and well known in the early second century. Such evidence has not only convinced textual scholars like Samuel P. Tregelles, a devout believer associated with the early Plymouth Brethren, but also well-known Fundamentalists and dispensationalists like A. C. Gaebelein and William Kelly, Baptists like John Broadus and A. T. Robertson, Reformed theologians like Benjamin B. Warfield and J. Gresham Machen, and other conservative Christian scholars around the world. Mr. Ruckman is not convincing when he talks about the "slovenly scholarship" of A. T. Robertson and others, or when he classes these men with infidels and atheists (*Handbook*, pp. 18, 63). These men were obviously not fools or infidels. The vast majority of conservative scholars for the past century have agreed that the Alexandrian text is the closest to the wording of the original. Mr. Ruckman admits that the faculties of almost all fundamental schools in the United States and Europe are firmly convinced that this text is the best (*Handbook*, p. 20).

The Byzantine text is later than the others and is a derived text. The earliest evidence for the Byzantine text is found in the following: W (IV-V century, Matthew and Luke), A (V century, Gospels), E (VIII century), F (IX century), G (X century), H (IX-X century), K (IX-XI century), and most later manuscripts. Thus the earliest evidence for the Byzantine text is the middle of the fourth century—two centuries later than the Alexandrian text. Some will say, "But could not these Byzantine manuscripts be copied from earlier sources?" Yes, of course. But what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander as well. The Alexandrian manuscripts were also copied from earlier sources, which would put the evidence for

them back into the first century! The plain truth of the matter is that the Alexandrian text has a two century advantage over the Byzantine text in age. It is also clear that the Byzantine text is a derived text. It obviously incorporates into itself the earlier readings found in both the Alexandrian and Western texts. Although the Western text is early and may be correct in some cases, it has so many additions and interpolations that few wish to defend it as a whole. A clear example of the derived nature of the Byzantine text is found in Luke 24:53 in which the disciples are described as being in the temple "praising and blessing God" (E VIII century, etc.). The Alexandrian text has the reading "blessing God" (P75 II-III century, etc.). The Western text has the reading "praising God" (D V-VI century, etc.). The Byzantine text simply put both readings together rather than omit one reading.

The Byzantine text is not identical with the Textus Receptus (Received Text). Mr. Ruckman refers to the Textus Receptus as though it were the original (*Handbook*, pp. 25, 30, etc.). The Textus Receptus began with an edition of the Greek New Testament put together by a Roman Catholic humanist, Desiderius Erasmus, in A.D. 1516. Even advocates of the Textus Receptus admit that the first edition had more typographical errors in it than they had ever seen before (F. H. A. Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, p. 185). Erasmus drew up other editions in A.D. 1519, 1522, 1527, and 1535, all of which introduced many changes and corrections. Stephens published editions of the Greek New Testament in 1546, 1549, 1550. Beza produced five editions in 1565, 1576, 1582, 1589, 1598. Elzivir printed editions in 1624, 1633, 1641. He was the first one to put in it the phrase *"Textum ab omnibus receptus"* (the text received by all), which gave the name Textus Receptus to this type of New Testament. John Mill reprinted Stephens' third edition with a few changes in 1707 and called it the Textus Receptus. Although there was a second edition in 1710, edited by Kuster, Mill's 1707 edition is still being reprinted as the Textus Receptus. Which of these 18 editions is the Textus Receptus? No two of them are alike. What is even more devastating is the fact that there is not a single manuscript of the Byzantine text that agrees completely with any one of these editions! These editions were all drawn up by comparing different

manuscripts and following now one, now another, of the readings found in them. There are a number of words in the Textus Receptus that are not found in any ancient Greek manuscript at all.

Erasmus had only one manuscript on the book of Revelation, and it lacked the last six verses. Undaunted, he took his Catholic Latin Vulgate Bible and translated the Latin into Greek for those verses. In doing this, he created some words that are not in any Greek manuscript anywhere. These spurious readings are still in the Textus Receptus. When A. T. Robertson discussed these characteristics of the Textus Receptus, he wrote: "It is worth while to explain precisely what the Textus Receptus is so that students may know at the very outset why it cannot now be followed" (*An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament, p. 17*).

All these editions which we have mentioned were attempts to get back to the wording of the original writings of the apostles. The labors have continued as the evidence for the text has increased. In 1734 a devout German expositor, J. A. Bengel, published an edition of the Greek Testament that included some of the newly discovered readings. He was bitterly attacked for it. In 1747 he replied to these attacks by writing, "Oh that this may be the last occasion of my standing in the gap to vindicate the precious original text of the New Testament" (quoted in S. P. Tregelles, *an Account of the Printed Text of the Greek New Testament*, p. 72). Tregelles himself described the abusive attacks to which he had been subjected for setting forth the oldest and best readings of the Greek manuscripts:

> These things are not very encouraging to those who, with solemn and heartfelt reverence for God's Holy Word, desire to serve Him, and to serve His people, by using intelligent criticism in connection with the text of the New Testament. Assailants often say much of the "temerity" of critics, and they speak of the "sweeping alterations" which they have made on "slight or insufficient grounds." This involves the question not simply of principles, but also of *facts*. It may not sound quite courteous to say of *such* opposers, *Don't believe them too readily*; but however it may be phrased, in whatever

gentle circumlocution it may be clothed, or with what soft epithets of any kind it may be accompanied, still those homely words express what has to be said, and that plainly and distinctly. There are good and sufficient reasons for speaking plainly; and though we should, if possible, maintain courtesy, in the place in which it ought to be found; yet it is better to be considered open to a charge on this head, than to be misunderstood as to important facts relative to the text of God's word. But indeed the defenders of that traditional modern Greek text of the later copyists and of the early editors who followed them, often seem to think that no courtesy *of any kind* is due to those scholars who recur to ancient authority at all. To say nothing of earlier assailants, Matthaei and his followers have shown with great skill what can be done by imputing evil motives, and misrepresenting principles, and that, too, in language most studiously offensive. I desire to adhere to all courtesy of expression and statement; but if it shows a want of urbanity plainly to say, that those who maintain the traditional text often *invent* or dream *their facts*, and then draw their inferences, then I must be obnoxious to the charge.

They *do* thus advance allegations *as facts*, which are *not* such; and by such invented premises, they draw conclusions of the most unfavorable kind against the ancient documents of every sort and region,—against the text which rests on such documents; and they speak against the critics who value them and bring them forward, as if they were both devoid of all acumen, and had no moral conscience with regard to Holy Scripture. This renders discussion almost impossible for it is not a question of principles, but often simply of *facts* (*An Account of the Printed Text of the Greek New Testament*, pp. 262—264).

The Present Greek Text

There is a difference between preservation and inspiration. When we speak of the inerrant, infallible, verbally-inspired Word of God, we are referring to the original Greek and Hebrew manuscripts. Any translation is inspired only insofar as it agrees with the originals. God's preservation is not

a continuing inspiration, but a preservation so that no teaching of the Bible would be lost. Every doctrine in the originals can be found in the King James Bible. To say, as Mr. Ruckman does, that the King James is inerrant is to say that God favors the English-speaking peoples of the world. On the contrary, God's Word is preserved in the sum-total of all the manuscripts (over 5000) which have been so far discovered. Thus God's Word is also preserved in the Bibles in German, French, Spanish, and other languages as well as in English. All these different translations do not agree with one another in details; therefore the wording of the Greek and Hebrew is the court of last resort to settle the meaning of any given passage in the Bible. "The truest interpretation of a passage is that which most accurately reflects the meaning of the original words" (Russ and Nettles, *Baptists and the Bible*, Chicago: Moody, 1980, p. 403).

There are three major conservative positions concerning the present Greek text. Most conservative Greek scholars favor the view that the oldest reading among the manuscripts is the closest to the original and should be followed. Some others argue that the true majority reading should always be preferred. A few others, like Mr. Ruckman, argue that the "A.V. 1611" is inspired and assume that the Greek text of Erasmus agrees with it. Actually he is defending the liturgical text of the Greek Orthodox Church. Wilbur Pickering admits that Erasmus' text differed from the majority text in about a thousand places (*The Identity of the New Testament Text*, p. 177, footnote 1). This means that Mr. Ruckman is defending some verses in the "A.V. 1611" that not only do not appear in the oldest manuscripts, but a majority of Greek manuscripts omit them.

The most notorious text of this nature is I John 5:7. Out of the more than 5000 Greek manuscripts there are only two (61 and 629) that have the text that the "A.V. 1611" follows. Erasmus did not include this verse in the first two editions of his Greek testament. Only when the Roman Catholic hierarchy ordered him to follow the Latin Vulgate reading and include it did he make a rash promise that if they could show him a Greek manuscript that had it, then he would print it. The evidence points to the two Greek manuscripts that have that reading being the two that the Roman Catholic hierarchy

provided to hold Erasmus to his promise. If he did not follow the reading of the Clementine Vulgate (the Latin Bible authorized by Pope Clement), they threatened to excommunicate him. He capitulated. Only then did he give in. Most reference Bibles have a note on that text similar to the one in the old *Scofield Reference Bible*, "It is generally agreed that v. 7 has no real authority, and has been inserted" (p. 1325). The context of the verse speaks of faith in Jesus as the Son of God (I John 5:5). Verse 6 goes on to state that Jesus came by water and blood and the Spirit bears witness. The overwhelming majority of manuscripts then read: "For there are three that bear witness, the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement" (I John 5:8, N.A.S.B.). It is evident that the Holy Spirit bears witness that Jesus is the Son of God; at the waters of baptism the Father declared, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17b); at the cross where the Lord shed His blood the centurion declared, "Truly this man was the Son of God" (Mark 15:39). John thus establishes a three-fold testimony that Jesus is the Son of God. The ancient reading of the majority text fits the context perfectly. There is no reason to introduce the doctrine of the Trinity. In this context it distracts from the direction of thought that John manifested.

Another passage that is an illustration of this blind defense of the "A.V. 1611" against the reading of the majority of Greek manuscripts is Acts 8:37. The implication is made that some Roman Catholics wanted to throw out a good testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God. But there is no good reason for any scribe to omit Acts 8:37 if he found it in the text. A Catholic Christian of the sixth to eighth centuries would have no reason to question that verse. He would be glad to confess Christ as the Son of God; the doctrine of the Trinity was a part of his confession; the baptism of adults in a missionary situation would be a normal occurrence in that period. The only real reason for a scribe in that time to omit the verse was if he failed to find it in the text he was copying. On the other hand there would be great motivation for a scribe to put the verse into a text if he found it in the margin and was not sure whether it belonged in the text or not. He would hesitate to leave out so clear a testimony to Christ. The verse is actually found in the Latin versions centuries before it is found in the

Greek manuscripts. The earliest Greek manuscript that has the verse is E*, which dates in the sixth century. Plainly the verse is a western addition that some Catholic Christian thought would make a good baptismal confession to enhance the record of the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch. The vast majority of Greek manuscripts do not have the verse. For further evidence see Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, pp. 359-360. It is another verse that Erasmus added from the Latin Vulgate because the Greek manuscripts he was using did not have the verse.

We must remember what God has said about His Word. "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11). These words certainly refer to the original text, the Hebrew and Greek that God verbally inspired. I do not think that this idea can be limited to the original text. God sends His Word in the form of translations to convert sinners and to edify saints. A good translation can be called God's Word. In fact even poor translations cannot completely destroy the power of God's Word. There are missionaries who will use the Roman Catholic Douay version or the Confraternity Bible in order to reach Roman Catholics with their own Bible. There are Catholics who have been converted by reading such Bibles. Although they are inferior translations, there is still something about them of the power of God's Word. To treat a single translation in a single language as though it were God's sole revelation of His Word to mankind is the height of provincial arrogance. To say, as Mr. Ruckman does, that the King James is the only Bible, not merely for the English-speaking world, but for all mankind, is to demonstrate ignorance of fact. Only a small percentage of the world's population can read English. God has used many different Bibles in many different languages to accomplish His purpose. The early church fathers regularly used the Septuagint, the Greek translation, as their Bible. Luther was deeply influenced by the Greek, Hebrew, and Latin Bibles before he ever translated the Bible into German. All these Bibles have been greatly used of God, but none of them exactly agrees with the King James Bible. Wherever the Word of God is faithfully preached, God will honor His word regardless of the

language used.

Obviously God cannot use an unfaithful or inaccurate translation as much as He can a good translation, but even in those flawed versions of the Bible some men can hear fragments of God's Word and be converted by what they hear. Believers should certainly use the most accurate translation that they can find to study God's Word. Ministers of the Word regularly study Greek and Hebrew so that they can study God's Word in the very words in which God inspired His Word. The authority of verbal inspiration rests on the original autographs and on every manuscript and translation only insofar as it reflects the wording of the original. It is our faith that the present editions of the Greek and Hebrew preserve the exact wording of the originals in the vast majority of passages, and that in every case the wording of the original has been preserved for us in some reading of the manuscripts. The present-day believer should read his Bible with the faith that it is God's Word, but with the humility of recognizing that he may not be able to solve every textual problem that may exist in our Bibles.

The believer may safely leave such problems to the discussions of theological and textual "experts." He should not try to become a botanist, but simply feed on the fruit of the Word. He can let the scholars chew over dry bones; he should fill his mind and conscience with the holy Word. Then he can say with the Psalmist, "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" (Psalm 119:103).

PART III.
The Ruckman Position

We must now survey Mr. Ruckman's writings to see what his distinctive position really is. Most of his writings are attacks upon others or denials that something or other is true. We must examine his dogmatic statements to determine his teaching.

His Factual Errors

The King James Bible did not include the Apocrypha. Mr. Ruckman states bluntly, "Neither Luther's Bible (1532-1545) nor the Authorized Bible (1611) ever included the Apocrypha" (*Handbook of Manuscript Evidence*, p. 54). He makes clear that the mere existence of the Apocrypha in the Bible proves its corruption (*Handbook of Manuscript Evidence*, p. 33). The *Apocrypha* is the name given to the books added to the Bible by the Roman Catholics. Historically, the Apocrypha was translated by the King James translators along with the Old and New Testaments (Frederic Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, p. 231). In fact, it was not until 1629 that the King James Bible was printed without the Apocrypha (Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, p. 220). We are not defending the Apocrypha. It is not an inspired part of

the Scripture at all. But the mere fact that it has been included in some versions of the Bible does not prove that they are corrupt versions, any more than the inclusion of other non-biblical material proves a version corrupt. Bibles often include Bible dictionaries, Scofield's notes, Thompson's Chain References, etc. None of these are inspired, but that does not make the Bible corrupt. Believers have always been careful to note the difference between the inspired text of the Bible and whatever may have been bound together with it. It is quite clear that Mr. Ruckman is factually wrong in claiming that the King James Bible did not include the Apocrypha.

The Westcott and Hort Greek text includes the Apocrypha. Mr. Ruckman claims, "Every Bible on the market since 1881 uses the Westcott and Hort Greek text, *which has the Apocrypha in it as a part of the Old Testament"* (sic; *Handbook of Manuscript Evidence*, p. 22). Brooke Foss Westcott and Fenton John Anthony Hort published *The New Testament in the Original Greek* (1881; commonly reprinted, New York: Macmillan, 1948). It did not include the Old Testament or the Apocrypha at all. Anyone can verify this fact.

The Septuagint was translated after the New Testament had been written. Mr. Ruckman claims that the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) "never existed until 100 years after the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ" (*Handbook of Manuscript Evidence*, p. 38). He has a whole chapter entitled "The Mythological LXX" (*Handbook of Manuscript Evidence*, pp. 40-54). In this chapter he charges, "To this day, no scholar has ever produced one Greek copy of the Old Testament written before 300 A.D. The entire legend of the Septuagint rests on the flimsy support that the manuscripts written 200-400 years AFTER the death of Christ *match the New Testament quotations.* Why shouldn't they? *All the writers had the New Testament on their writing tables"* (sic; *Handbook of Manuscript Evidence*, p. 43). It is very important for Mr. Ruckman to establish this point, because, if the Septuagint is as "corrupt" as Mr. Ruckman says, why would the Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles quote from it? Consequently, Mr. Ruckman believes that the Septuagint was translated by people who had the New Testament before them and made sure that their translation agreed with the New Testament wording. This is simply a theory that Mr. Ruckman

fabricated. There is absolutely no evidence for it at all. On the contrary, there is excellent evidence for the existence of the Septuagint long before the time of the New Testament. In this case the famous Dead Sea Scrolls have provided a wealth of information that completely discredits Mr. Ruckman's opinions. *The Biblical Archeologist* published an article by Patrick W. Skehan, "The Biblical Scrolls from Qumran and the Text of the Old Testament" (28:87-100, Sept. 1965), well before Mr. Ruckman wrote his *Handbook*. The article lists scores of manuscripts in Greek that were circulating while the New Testament was being written, because Qumran was destroyed in A.D. 70 (p. 88f.). The only biblical book not found in the Qumran Septuagint is Esther, and other information shows that it was circulating in Greek by 75 B.C. "at least" (p. 89). A very interesting leather scroll of the twelve Minor Prophets in Greek has been found in the Judean desert. Scholars call it "R" and date it in the first century (*Biblica*, 55:1, 15-22, 1974). The oldest known papyrus fragments of the Greek Deuteronomy are called "P. Rylands Gr. 458." It is a manuscript which is dated about the middle of the second century B.C. (*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 39:240-44, April, 1977). This date is remarkably close to the time when the Septuagint was translated (250-150 B.C.). The next earliest example of the Greek Deuteronomy ("848") is dated about a century later.

What are the implications of these facts? The Lord Jesus Christ quoted from the Septuagint (the exact wording of the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus manuscripts) even when the wording differed from that of the Hebrew text (Matthew 15:8-9; Luke 4:18-19). The Apostle Paul also quoted from the Septuagint at times when the wording differed from that of the Hebrew (Romans 9:27-28; Galatians 4:27). The Lord and His apostles were certainly not quoting from a work that they regarded as "corrupt." Instead they were quoting from the common Bible of the Greek-speaking world, just as the King James is the common Bible of the English-speaking world. Christians who believe in the inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible must confess that God the Holy Spirit led the biblical writers to include these quotations from the Septuagint in their biblical books, and that therefore, these quotations from the Septuagint are the infallible Word of the living God! (Mr. Ruckman's opinions to the contrary notwithstanding.) In fact,

the very men who translated the King James Bible disagreed with the position that Mr. Ruckman is advocating. In their "Preface" to the King James Bible the translators state, "The translation of the seventy dissenteth from the original in many places, neither doth it come near it for perspicuity; yet which of the Apostles did condemn it? Condemn it? Nay, they used it . . . which they would not have done . . . if they had been unworthy the appellation and name of the Word of God" (from the paragraph "An answer to imputations"). Plainly, the King James translators were willing to use the term "Word of God" in a much broader sense than Mr. Ruckman will allow. In the same "Preface" to the King James Bible the translators say, "We affirm and avow, that the very meanest translation of the Bible in English set forth by men of our profession . . . containeth the word of God, nay, is the word of God" (from the same paragraph). It would be well, however, to define terms more closely by saying that any translation, insofar as it agrees with the original Greek and Hebrew, is the Word of God. This is the reason that some people have been saved reading the Roman Catholic Douay Bible. There is no excuse, however, for using a poor or inaccurate Bible when there are good ones available.

The Septuagint and the Westcott and Hort New Testament are written in classical Greek. Mr. Ruckman claims that the Septuagint "is a translation of the Old Testament into *classical Greek* (not Koine)," and goes on in a footnote to charge the same thing against the Westcott and Hort New Testament, concluding that they are *"a Classical Philosopher's counterfeit Bible for use among Bible denying intellectuals"*(*Handbook of Manuscript Evidence*, pp. 67, 196). The evidence that he offers to prove this assertion is a few differences in the spelling of words (pp. 93-94). Apparently Mr. Ruckman has never studied classical Greek. A student of the Greek New Testament does not just open up a work in classical Greek and start reading! There are differences in word endings, differences in grammatical constructions, differences in vocabulary. A modern parallel is the difference between Elizabethan English and modern English. The fact of the matter is that the Septuagint, Westcott and Hort's New Testament, as well as the other New Testaments are written in Koine Greek, the common spoken Greek of the first century world. Classical Greek was the

language used before Alexander's conquests (c. 330 B.C.), whereas Koine Greek was the common language from about 300 B.C. to A.D. 330 (A.T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, p. 43).

The Peshitta (date 200 A.D.) had in its original form the whole text of the A.V. 1611. Mr. Ruckman dates the Peshitta (the Syriac translation of the Bible) about 200 A.D. (*Handbook of Manuscript Evidence*, p. 26). On the contrary, the Peshitta is dated at the beginning of the fifth century.* There was a confusion of contradictory translations before that time (F.F. Bruce, *The Books and the Parchments*, p. 184). Mr. Ruckman claims that the Peshitta included the whole text of the Old and New Testaments "as it stands in the A.V. 1611" (*Handbook of Manuscript Evidence*, p. 79). It is a simple fact, however, that all copies of the Peshitta that are known omit five New Testament books: II Peter, II and III John, Jude, and the Revelation (Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, p. 164). It was not until A.D. 508 that the Philoxenian Syriac translation added translations of these books to the Syriac.

It is the avowed purpose of Mr. Ruckman to prove *"the superiority of the A.V. 1611 English over the 'Original Greek'* " (*Handbook of Manuscript Evidence*, p. 11). He claims again and again that "the English readings are superior to the Greek readings" (*Handbook*, p. 116). "The A.V. 1611 is necessary to recover the original text and straighten out the corrupt Greek" (*Handbook*, p. 120). "The A.V. 1611 text is correct; the Greek texts are wrong" (*Handbook*, p. 125). "Where the Greek says one thing and the A.V. says another, throw out the Greek" (*Handbook*, p. 137). "A little English will clear up the obscurities in any Greek text" (*Handbook*, p. 147). It is clear that he is addressing readers who do not know what he is talking about and who have no academic equipment to evaluate what he is claiming. On one occasion Mr. Ruckman addresses the reader by saying, "Since you don't know the Greek ... you'd better go by the A.V. 1611 text" (*Handbook*, p. 138). He charges, "Some superstitious scholar like A.T. Robertson, or Alford, or Trench, or Wescott [sic] and Hort, or Thayer might take a chance in saying the King James is only a 'TRANSLATION' " (*Mark of the Beast*, p. 40).

*Metzger suggests before A.D. 431 (*The Text of the New Testament*, pp. 69-70).

In point of fact, Fundamentalists have always made clear that the inspiration and inerrancy which they were contending for was that of the original Greek and Hebrew manuscripts. "The record for whose inspiration we contend is the original record—the autographs or parchments of Moses, David, Daniel, Matthew, Peter, or Paul as the case may be and not any particular translation or translations of them whatever" (*The Fundamentals*, "Inspiration of the Bible," p. 127). To exalt any translation of the Greek and Hebrew manuscripts into a position of superiority over them is a ridiculous and futile effort. Mr. Ruckman refers to the Authorized Version 1611 A.D. as "a complete Bible in universal language of the world. Any 'bible' contradicting it is 'APOCRYPHAL' Literature" (sic., "The Monarch of the Books," p. 8). But there is no universal language of the world. An English translation is a Bible for English-speaking peoples. The translations in other languages differ from the English translations. If the Authorized Version of 1611 is indeed the one infallible Bible in the world, then all the rest of the world would be at a serious disadvantage, for no other translation completely agrees with the A.V.

Mr. Ruckman asserts that *Martin Luther did not use the Latin Vulgate, but the Old Latin* (*Handbook of Manuscript Evidence*, p. 73). Most of the Old Latin manuscripts that we have date from the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries (Nestle, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, p. 71). Ninety-seven editions of the Latin Vulgate were printed between A.D. 1450 and 1500, and certainly from a copy of one of these Luther did his study (Schaff, VII, p. 343, note 3; pp. 346-47). Mr. Ruckman is committed ahead of time to denying that any good could come from any version other than the A.V. 1611. It remains true that Luther was profoundly affected by studying the Latin Vulgate. "He read the same daily with great zeal and acquired a most extraordinary knowledge of its contents" (M. Reu, *Luther and the Scriptures*, pp. 7ff.).

Most of the time Mr. Ruckman argues from the majority text, the so-called Textus Receptus, but *when it suits his purpose, he rejects the majority reading to defend the K.J.V.* He says, "in exceptional cases, where the *majority of Greek manuscripts stand against the A.V. 1611, put them in file 13" (Handbook of Manuscript Evidence*, 130). This means that Mr.

Ruckman is not really following the majority of Greek manuscripts out of conviction, but solely because they happen to agree with the A.V. 1611.

His Personal Bias

Mr. Ruckman defends his position with open prejudice and is completely biased against any opposing view. He boasts that he would not believe that the Septuagint really existed even "if a thousand pieces of papyrus were recovered with Old Testament Greek on them, written before 100 B.C." (*Handbook*, p. 51). In effect he is saying that he would not believe any evidence that contradicted his personal opinion.

In his little booklet, "The Monarch of the Books," Mr. Ruckman argues that the Textus Receptus came from Antioch in Syria, followed the paths of John and Paul, the Waldensians, Huss, Luther, Calvin, etc., and must be the God-honored text. In contrast he argues that the Alexandrian text started in Egypt (the type of the world), is passed on to Rome (where the "popes" are), and from there to England (where Bloody Mary and Westcott and Hort are), and therefore must be the corrupt text ("The Monarch of the Books," Chart one, pp. 6-7). He is alleging that anything that comes from Alexandria, Egypt, or Rome, Italy, must be wrong; anything that comes from Antioch, Syria, must be right. This is geographical prejudice.

Mr. Ruckman extends this line of reasoning by vilifying the Western fathers (Irenaeus, Tertullian, Cyprian, Jerome, Augustine) and the Alexandrian fathers (Clement, Origen, Athanasius, Cyril), and by glorifying the Antiochan fathers (Ignatius, Polycarp, Lucian, Chrysostom, Theodoret). The Alexandrian fathers he calls "a group of dead Orthodox Bible revisers"; the Western fathers he calls "a group of Catholics who worship traditions" (*Handbook*, p. 76). He calls the Syrian group, the Antiochan fathers, "a group of Bible believing, Bible preaching people who were first called 'Christians' at Antioch" (*Handbook*, p. 76). This is grossly unjust to the Western and Alexandrian fathers, many of whom were leaders in the attack against the heresy of Arianism (Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, III, 634-635). The Alexandrian bishop, Athanasius, courageously fought for the deity of

Christ against the Arians for a generation (Schaff, III, 626-638). Mr. Ruckman has nothing but scorn for Athanasius (*Handbook*, p. 76). This evident bias that Mr. Ruckman has against anyone who disagrees with him leads him to utter some very intemperate words against some very good men. He attacks Augustine, Eusebius, and Origen as "responsible for more error in the the Body of Christ than any ten atheists, or infidels, who ever lived" (*Handbook*, p. 56). The Syrian church has produced its share of doctrinal error. We must consider this in our next section on Mr. Ruckman's doctrinal heresy.

His Doctrinal Heresy

Mr. Ruckman thinks that the average Christian in the early church was an Arian (a heretic who denied the deity of Christ). "The average Christian of Origen's day (and later) was called 'Arian' because he refused to accept Psalm 2:7 as a pre-Genesis verse. This means that the vast 'Arian' hordes which invaded Rome between 400-700 A.D. were made up largely of converted Gentiles (Japheth) who were saved under the teaching and preaching of men like Nestorius, Ulfilas, Arius, and other 'heretics' " (Ruckman's *The Book of Proverbs*, pp. 120-121). He goes on to claim "Arius (256-336) was a soul-winning evangelist compared to Augustine and Jerome" (*The Book of Proverbs*, p. 121). He is not writing this out of ignorance because he refers again to the controversy between Athanasius and Arius (*The Book of Proverbs*, p. 669). This means that Mr. Ruckman, because he is trying to get help for his odd interpretation of the text, is willing to side with some of the worst heretics that the Christian church has ever seen.

Arianism is not a matter of minor interpretations of a few Old Testament passages as Mr. Ruckman would have people believe, but rather it is a denial of the very heart of the Christian faith. Arius denied that the Lord Jesus Christ was the divine Son of God, denied that He was eternal, denied that He was of the same essence as the Father. Arius taught what modern day Jehovah's Witnesses teach: that Jesus Christ was the first created being that God made. The well-known church historian Philip Schaff characterized the heresy by saying,

> Arianism was a religious political war against the

> spirit of the Christian revelation by the spirit of the world, which, after having persecuted the church three hundred years from without, sought under the Christian name to reduce her by degrading Christ to the category of the temporal and the created, and Christianity to the level of natural religion. It substituted for a truly divine Redeemer, a created demigod, an elevated Hercules. Arianism proceeded from human reason, Athanasianism from divine revelation .... The former was deistic and rationalistic, the latter theistic and supernaturalistic, in spirit and effect. The one made reasonableness, the other agreement with Scripture, the criterion of truth (Schaff, III, 642-43).

If Mr. Ruckman is going to side with the enemies of Christ to defend his private interpretations of the text, Bible-believing Christians should have nothing to do with his teaching. Pastors who are zealous for the honor of the Lord Jesus Christ will certainly not wish to have an Arian sympathizer in their pulpits.

Why does Mr. Ruckman attack Augustine for teaching "trinitarian doctrines"? Mr. Ruckman lists four things that he attacks in Augustine's writings: "amillennialism, predestination, trinitarian doctrines, and baptismal regeneration" (*The Book of Proverbs*, p. 122). The doctrine of the Trinity is one that all conservative believers will defend. Is Mr. Ruckman's prejudice moving him to attack orthodox teachings of men that he wishes to discredit? Is his prejudice allowing him to commend Arian missionaries like Ulfilas (Schaff, III, 641)? Is he willing to endorse the teachings of the condemned heretic Nestorius just because he was from Antioch, Syria (Schaff, III, 729)?

His Bias Against Westcott and Hort

Westcott and Hort have become the "whipping boys" for the whole movement that Mr. Ruckman typifies. Mr. Ruckman calls the statement "Westcott and Hort were brilliant Biblical scholars" a lie, and responds to the statement by writing, "There is no evidence that either man was saved; there is no evidence that either man believed that the Bible

was inspired at any time—past, present, or future. There is no evidence that either man knew any more about BIBLE scholarship than did any Pope before 1850" ("The Alexandrian Cult," Part One, p. 7). Most of the things quoted against Westcott and Hort come from their private correspondence. One of the damaging things quoted against Hort was written when he was 23 (1851). To quote a man's private correspondence and statements of early years when his theological position was still being formed is unfair at the very least. Especially when these men have written in their mature years book after book defending the conservative interpretation of Scripture, it is unjust to characterize their whole ministries by a few misinterpretations that they may have been guilty of. To set the record straight let us note some of the ideas which can be found in the major works of Westcott and Hort in their mature years.

Westcott, Brooke Foss.

The Gospel According to St. John. 1881; rpt.

He teaches the deity and eternality of the Son (p. 2).

He speaks of the act of personal faith which is now needed (p. 8).

He defends the Virgin Birth (Miraculous Conception) of Christ (p. 10).

He defends the incarnation and preexistence of Christ (p. 12).

He stresses the deity of Christ and His equality with the Father (pp. 15, 84, 140, 200, 210, 237, 239, 293, etc.).

He teaches the vicarious suffering of Christ (p. 20).

He teaches the heavenly origin of Christ (p. 60).

He teaches the virtue of Christ's blood (p. 107).

He calls Christ the Source and the support of life (pp. 112-13).

He speaks of Christ's true deity and personal fellowship with the Father (p. 136).

He mentions the divine-human Person of the Lord (p. 156, 297).

He teaches the unity and equality of Christ and the Father (p. 159).

He teaches the meaning of the life, death, and resurrection of

Christ (p. 229).
He defends the preexistence of Christ (p. 248).

The Epistle to the Hebrews. 1889; rpt.
He calls Christ the creator and heir of all things (p. 7).
He teaches that the Son is the perfect representation of the Father (p. 10).
He discusses the divine names applied to Christ (pp. 33-35).
He teaches that the Son could become man without a change in His divine Person (p. 60).
He teaches the perfection of Christ (pp. 65ff.).
He teaches the sinlessness of Christ (p. 129).
He claims that the Son of God was beyond time (p. 173).
He calls Christ holy, guileless, etc. (p. 193).
He holds that the offering of Christ was once for all (p. 215).
He teaches the absolute supremacy of Christ as High-priest (p. 255).
He explains Christ's blood sacrifice as voluntary, rational, spontaneous, and moral (p. 261).
He claims that the efficacy of Christ's blood inaugurated the New Covenant (p. 263).
He calls Christ a divine-human Person (265).
He holds that Christ's blood was the medium in which complete purification is effected (p. 268).
He teaches that Christ provided an absolute atonement (p. 275).
He holds that in the blood of Jesus we have boldness to enter God's presence (p. 294).
He calls Christ a ransom for life (p. 295).
He calls Christ's death on the cross a sacrifice of atonement, a Covenant Sacrifice, etc. (p. 297).
He claims that it is not the offering that perfects, but Christ Himself who perfects by His offering (p. 315).
He speaks of the sovereign power of our Priest (p. 321).
He speaks of being sprinkled with Christ's blood (p. 322).
He discusses the effects of Christ's sacrifice: hallowing, cleansing, perfecting His saints (pp. 344-47).
He mentions the abiding results of Christ's work (p. 397).
He discusses the Christology of Hebrews: the divine being of the Son, the work of the incarnate Christ, etc. (pp. 424-28).

Hort, Fenton John Anthony.

"If the invisible Lord is the primary subject, both parts of the book have a natural and fitting bond. Chapter 1:12-18 is the first revelation of Jesus Christ and the several features of it reappear in the several seven epistles. The next part of the book (cc. 4, 5) opens with the vision of the Throne in heaven and God Most High sitting upon it, then of the Lamb that was slain and the adoration of Him. Again in c. 19:11-16 the rider of the white horse is seen going forth to judgement and war, His name being 'The Word of God.' That is, at the outset of the visions which follow the epistles we have a revelation of Jesus Christ in that form which fully expresses the double name, Jesus made both Lord and Christ, the Lamb of suffering and humility adored in heaven in highest glory; and again another revelation of Jesus Christ in which, though He seem to be quiescent and powerless, He goes forth in His might as King of Kings and Lord of Lords to execute judgement on the sinful nations, as in II Thes. 1:7ff" (*The Apocalypse of St. John I-III*, Macmillan, 1908, p. 4).

On Revelation 3:7: "As holy, He is of purer eyes, than to behold iniquity, He must be the avenger of these hideous crimes on earth; as true, He must fulfill His word and His attributes, not forsaking His servants or leaving His law unvindicated. Christ was recognized by the demons as the Holy One of God, the pure and perfect expression of the heavenly holiness" (*Apocalypse of St. John I-III*, p. 34).

He defends the doctrine of the Trinity (*The First Epistle of St. Peter 1:1—2:17*, p. 181, 1898).

He defends the blood atonement (*I Pet. 1:1—2:17*, pp. 23-25).

He teaches the equality of the Father and the Son (Ibid. p. 30).

"*Jesus is Lord* stands as the fundamental and sufficient expression of Christian faith" (Ibid., p. 30).

He defends the resurrection of Christ (Ibid., p. 34).

God revealed to Paul that the Jesus he was persecuting was His own Son (Ibid., p. 45).

He defends the vicarious blood atonement (Ibid., pp. 78-79).

These Scripture passages "represent the blood of the

Lamb as the ransom paid for the release of every nation from the bondage of the earth, and from the bondage of men (the world), and from the bondage of their sins" (Ibid., p. 79).

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These are not the ideas of unsaved men, much less of abominable reprobates. It is admitted that Westcott and Hort are Anglicans and taught baptismal regeneration. I think they were wrong on those points, but it is not possible to call them liberals in view of the above teaching.

The real question, however, is not whether Westcott and Hort can be approved on all points. It is whether the principles on which they drew up their Greek New Testament were valid. The greatest Greek scholars that America has ever produced were firmly convinced that their Greek New Testament was based on correct principles. A.T. Robertson, a strongly conservative Baptist, and Gresham Machen, a strongly conservative Presbyterian, were both defenders of the Alexandrian text and the principles on which it was based.

His Twisted Portrait of the Lord Jesus Christ

Fundamentalists have categorically rejected the sickeningly sentimental picture that the liberals paint of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord was a person of strength and majesty during the days of His earthly ministry, but He was also a person of compassion and sympathy. Mr. Ruckman seriously twists the biblical portrait of the Lord Jesus Christ in order to make Him more like his own personal character. He calls the Lord Jesus a "Revolutionist" (*The Gospel of Matthew*, p. 28). In a comment on Matthew 15, Mr. Ruckman states, "In His usual rude way, the Lord ignores the question and does not even bother to answer it" (p. 266). When he discusses the Lord's dealing with the Syrophenician woman, Mr. Ruckman says, "Jesus does the most humiliating thing He could do. He calls her *racial characteristics* to her attention, and without using the word 'nigger,' He answers just about as rudely and uncouthly as a man could. As to whether or not the term 'nigger' is worse than 'bitch' is hard to say, but in plain English (never mind Greek scholarship, they don't know what He said!), that is what He called her" (*Matthew*, p. 276)! To picture

the Lord Jesus Christ as rude and uncouth is a false and unbiblical portrait. The biblical portrait of the Lord Jesus Christ is one of strength and sternness in regard to evil, but of love and compassion in regard to people. When the Lord Jesus Christ denounced the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 23), He used some admittedly strong language, but there is no hint that He ever lost control. Mr. Ruckman states that "the Lord Jesus is standing, fist-clenched, face reddened, veins distended in the forehead, and teeth flashing, as the bearded jaw works over its listeners savagely" (*Matthew*, p. 498). This is a false portrait. The Lord Jesus Christ never spoke or acted in any way that could be correctly termed "savage." To picture the Lord Jesus Christ as worked up into a fleshly fury is to utterly distort the biblical picture of the Lord. There may be sternness in the Lord's words, but there is always calmness and restraint as well. Mr. Ruckman goes on to claim that the Lord Jesus used "invectives, insults, jeers, and vilification" (*Matthew*, p. 502). Instead of trying to force the Lord Jesus Christ into the mold of his own personal character, it would be better if Mr. Ruckman meditated on the true biblical portrait of the Lord Jesus Christ, and let that portrait remove the rudeness, uncouthness, and savageness which Mr. Ruckman evidently wishes to excuse.

There is no reasonable doubt about the biblical portrait of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth" (Isaiah 42:1-3). "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth" (Isaiah 53:6-7). "Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him? The officers answered, Never man spake like this man" (John 7:45-46). There is never a particle of bitterness or unkindness in the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. Even when the situation demanded a denuncia-

tion, He was always holy and compassionate.

His Theological Inconsistencies

Mr. Ruckman disassociates himself from all theological positions. He has his own private interpretations. He defines an Arminian as one who believes in salvation by works (*The Gospel of Matthew*, pp. 88, 132); he attacks Reformed theology and Calvin in particular (*Matthew*, pp. 336, 338); he not only distinguishes his position from the Landmark Baptists (*Matthew*, pp. 449-50), but from all Baptists (*Matthew*, p. 567); he attacks Larkin, Scofield, Gaebelein, and others because they are not dispensational enough (*Matthew*, p. 572). He himself teaches seven different baptisms and five different dispensations in the New Testament alone (*Matthew*, pp. 51, 583). Although he holds that the Rapture is undated (*Matthew*, p. 312), he also thinks that the generation alive in 1948 A.D. will see the Rapture (*Matthew*, p. 552). In one context he declares that the Kingdom will be set up in 2000 A.D. (*Matthew*, p. 313), but in another context he maintains that the Second Coming of Christ will occur in 2004 A.D. (*Matthew*, p. 393). Since Mr. Ruckman is a pretribulationist, this is some form of contradictory date-setting.

In an extended passage Mr. Ruckman argues that the church has eternal security, but after the Rapture occurs, a man can be saved and can then lose his salvation (*Matthew*, pp. 562-565). Mr. Ruckman teaches that tribulation period saints must work to be saved (as he believes Old Testament saints did), and can then lose their salvation (*Matthew*, p. 571). Such interpretations manufacture contradictions between the Old and New Testaments, changing the basic nature of God's salvation. He holds that no Old Testament saint was born again (*Matthew*, p. 703). Despite these inconsistencies, he can refer to his commentary on Matthew as "the first real commentary ever written on Matthew" (*Matthew*, p. 738).

His Odd Doctrines

Mr. Ruckman maintains that an angel is a ghost-like appearance (*The Gospel of Matthew*, p. 18). He claims that no "sane Christian in his right mind" could reconcile the Sermon

on the Mount with the Pauline Epistles (*Matthew*, p. 74). He denies that the word "corn" refers to wheat or barley, but instead insists that it refers to "real corn" (*Matthew*, p. 202). He thinks that many angels will soon appear as "men from outer space" (*Matthew*, p. 343). He denies that the general meaning alone of a parable should be stressed; instead he insists that every detail of a parable has specific meaning and should be stressed (*Matthew*, pp. 438-439). Mr. Ruckman maintains that there will be no females in heaven; all resurrected saints must be "33-year-old, sinless males" (*Matthew*, p. 471). He argues that travel from east to west honors God; moving from west to east dishonors God (*Matthew*, pp. 538-539). He denies that the great commission in Matthew 28 is for the church in the present age (*Matthew*, p. 221). One of his strangest interpretations is that demons like warm, wet places (*Matthew*, p. 221). There is, however, no shortage of temptation in any geographic location or climate. Satan's minions are always on the attack, regardless of the believer's location.

His Judging of the Brethren

The Scriptures clearly prohibit any believer from setting himself up as a judge of another man's eternal destiny. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand" (Romans 14:4). No one wishes to defend Origen's numerous errors, but for Mr. Ruckman to question Origen's salvation and to call him "*a first-rate, egotistical, Bible-perverting heretic* (*Handbook of Manuscript Evidence*, p. 189, notes 4 and 6) shows that Mr. Ruckman is not afraid to arrogate powers of judgment to himself. He charges Origen with not being a Bible believer, with never being a Bible literalist (*Handbook of Manuscript Evidence*, p. 55). Yet all his life Origen tried to live in obedience to the Bible. Many of his interpretations of Scripture were literalistic to the extreme: when Origen studied the Lord's saying "There be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake" (Matthew 19:12), he had himself castrated to fulfill the verse. Even Mr. Ruckman would not interpret the Bible that literally!

Origen influenced many people for good in his lifetime. A

number of his pupils courageously witnessed for Christ and were martyred for their testimony (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, VI, IV, Loeb Library, II, 23). Many of the later Nicene fathers voiced their indebtedness to Origen. Among these were Athanasius, Basil, the two Gregories, Hilary, and Ambrose (Schaff, II, 791). Origen was himself seized in the pagan persecutions and was tortured for a protracted time without abandoning his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Eusebius describes how he was loaded with chains in the recesses of his dungeon. "For many days his feet were stretched four spaces in that instrument of torture, the stocks" (*Ecclesiastical History*, VI, XXXIX, Loeb Library, II, 95). Origen died a short while after being released from his imprisonment, never having compromised his testimony for Christ. Most historians attribute his death to the effects of what he had suffered in prison.

We may well think of Paul's searching question: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ" (Romans 14:10). Origen and Ruckman shall face one another at the judgment seat of Christ. The Lord alone is capable of judging who is the greater heretic.

His Evil Speaking

The Scripture commands the servant of Christ to be "an example of the believers, in word" (I Timothy 4:12). James commands all believers, "Speak not evil one of another, brethren" (4:11). Mr. Ruckman has violated these scriptural commands. In his book, *Satan's Masterpiece: The New ASV*, Mr. Ruckman launches a crude and vulgar attack against an amazing variety of scholars and preachers. He attacks by name Dr. John R. Rice and *The Sword of the Lord* (p. 5), Bob Jones University (p. 6), Philip Schaff (p. 8), Bruce Metzger (p. 12), Dr. Marshall Neal and myself (p. 13), Westcott and Hort (p. 14), Lightfoot and Ellicott (p. 17), A. T. Robertson, Davis, Machen, Griesbach, Tischendorf, Jerome, Augustine (p. 20), the entire faculty at Moody, Fuller, Wheaton, and Dallas (pp. 33-34), Dr. Culbertson (p. 34), English, Weniger (p. 37), the Lockman Foundation, Tregelles, Mickey Rooney (!), Bob Jones, Bob Jones III (p. 38), Tennessee Temple, Oral

Roberts, Columbia Bible College, Jack Hyles (p. 41), Nestle (p. 42), Biola, Trinity (p. 55), Eusebius, Souter, Laird Harris, Kenneth Wuest (p. 57), Ellis, Lange, Meyer, Vincent (p. 58), Dr. Thieme, Dr. Sala (p. 61), Falwell, Trench (p. 63), Dr. Wilbur Smith (p. 69), Calvin, Milligan, Thayer (p. 70), and Dr. Epp (p. 76). Although this list is not exhaustive, it is a fair sampling of the names scattered thoughout his book. It would be impossible for any one person to be in theological agreement with the entire list. What is the sin of which this entire group is guilty? It is denying that "the Authorized Reading of the Holy Bible (1611) is entirely correct" (p. 12). "The correct text" is not the Greek but "the King James text" (p. 31). He admits that the NASV teaches the deity of Christ and the Virgin Birth (p. 34). Thus he is making his personal interpretation the sole standard of judgment and condemns anyone who disagrees with him.

What does he call these men and institutions that he disagrees with? Mr. Ruckman calls them "an apostolic succession of bloated egotists" (p. IX), "a cheap, lying scoundrel" (p. 4), "A 20th century Pontius Pilate" (p. 10), "hot-headed fanatics and crackpots," "dead-orthodox apostates" (p. 16), "lying scribes" (p. 21), "lying poachers" (p. 22), "silly ass" (p. 24), "fanatical crackpots" (p. 31), "rabid hyena" (p. 33), "dead-orthodox conservatives who are pushing the latest dump truck" (p. 34), "liar" (p. 37), "out-and-out crooks" (p. 40), "superstitious Greek scholars" (p. 42), "stupid Conservatives" (p. 42), "reprobates" (p. 47), "this bunch of egotistical jack legs" (p. 50), "conservative asses whose brains have gone to seed" (p. 52). He expressly classes Dr. A. T. Robertson with "Bloody Mary, Adolf Hitler, Carl Chessman, Charles Manson" (p. 72). One of the dirtiest names that he can think of seems to be "baby-sprinkling A-millennialist" (p. IV).

With this savage attack we must contrast the words of Michael the archangel, who in contending with the devil would only say, "The Lord rebuke thee" (Jude 9). Mr. Ruckman's words cannot be termed "speaking the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15). The words of the apostle Paul are binding on all believers; "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven

you" (Ephesians 4:31-32). Mr. Ruckman does not meet the scriptural qualifications for a servant of Christ.

His Divorce and Remarriage

The Bible is very clear on the qualifications for the Christian pastor. "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach" (I Timothy 3:2). A divorced man does not meet these qualifications. On February 27, 1962, Mrs. Janie Ruckman was awarded a divorce from Peter S. Ruckman by the Circuit Court of Baldwin County, Alabama (case number 5650), on grounds of "voluntary abandonment." After this Mr. Ruckman wrote a letter to Dr. Bob Jones Jr. denying that he was divorced. Since then, however, Mr. Ruckman has gone on to remarry Mrs. Sherrell Louise Ruben (marriage license issued on October 30, 1972 in Escambia County, Florida), a woman who is herself a divorcee (Sherrell Louise Littlejohn).

We refer to these facts not to reflect on Mr. Ruckman personally but to demonstrate to the reader how unreliable are the positions that Mr. Ruckman takes and how dangerous his line of reasoning is.

Since Mr. Ruckman does not meet the scriptural qualifications for a Christian minister, no church or school should offer him a preaching opportunity. The Lord equips and qualifies His ministers for His service. The Lord's people must abide by His revealed will in matters of qualification.

CORRECTION: Dr. Ruckman's first wife abandoned him and filed for a divorce on grounds of cruelty. The divorce was denied her and was then granted to him on the grounds of her voluntary abandonment.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Ruckman has misrepresented the value of the manuscripts; he has misrepresented the facts; he has misrepresented the biblical portrait of the Lord Jesus Christ; he has manifested a bitter spirit; and for years he has divided God's people against themselves. He has tried to make his followers blind fanatics. They cannot think for themselves; they must accept with blind submission Mr. Ruckman's infallible pronouncements. Therefore, let all the Christian world know that Mr. Ruckman has started a cult. No born again, Bible-believing Christian should have anything further to do with Mr. Ruckman or with his literature.

The Bible-believing Christian ought to read his English Bible with zeal and delight. The King James Bible and the New American Standard Bible are both good translations that honor the Lord Jesus Christ. The believer ought to read his Bible searching for blessings, seeking Christ in Scripture, not searching for critical problems and worrying over dry bones. The Bible was not inspired to produce textual scholars; it was inspired to feed God's people. Let us search the Scriptures for spiritual food; let us feed upon the true Bread of heaven revealed in His Word (John 6:32). If men do not see Christ in Scripture, no amount of Bible study will do them any good (John 5:39-40).

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